Book Reviews

Élisabeth Le, *Degrees of European belonging*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2021; xvi + 251 pp., 99€ (e-book).

Reviewed by: Mario Bisiada, *Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain*

The main purpose of the book is to combat the "us" vs "them" dichotomy by drawing attention to the "fuzzy areas between" (p. xv). As the title suggests, it is about belonging or non-belonging to Europe and thus complements two previous books from the same author, on discourse in the French *Le Monde* newspaper. In chapter 1, Le sets the stage by critiquing the "us" vs "them" dichotomy, discussing the polysemy of Europe and adopting some definitions of European identities. She also introduces the notion of "liminal entities", which are defined in Section 1.1 as entities in transition or otherwise in-between, to describe what she identifies as fuzzy areas between belonging and non-belonging. One of the book's merits is that Le ponders the complexity of what "Europe" is in the face of overlapping areas such as Schengen, the Eurozone or the European Economic Area. The book enquires in an adequately complex way what European identity refers to, drawing both on official EC/EU stances and analyses and on academic studies of the issue. Le rightfully points out that the study sets itself apart from others by understanding Europe in its largest (geographical) sense rather than as limited to the EU, according to the position adopted by *Le Monde*.

As regards the concept of liminal entities and their given and assumed roles in this identity, a positive aspect of the book is the way it treats the potentially difficult aspect of distinguishing between what is the everyday felt reality by Europeans and what is a constructed reality in newspapers. In many ways, the lived reality seems to me indeed one of grey areas rather than "us vs them", while newspaper discourse often reinforces the latter binary perspective. For that reason, Le's choice of a social constructionist approach is a good one. As she notes at the outset and in the final paragraphs of the book, the reality we encounter is to a large extent influenced by our actions, views and statements, and media discourse "participates in their readers' construction of reality, and ultimately may impact their behaviour (p. 12), warning us that "we should be careful in how we feed our imagination and end up 'excluding others'" (p. 215).

In chapter 2, Le provides a comprehensive account of the newspaper under study. She introduces the "central question asked in this book": how does *Le Monde* consider "the issue of membership and belonging to Europe", particularly asking whether there is any

State on or near the European continent that "does not completely belong, and why?" (p. 25). The framework is clearly explained and it is a commendable aspect of the book that key methodological concepts such as constructionism, ideology and identity are concisely defined and referenced. The chapter also contains the expected details on the construction of the corpora, consisting of both headlines and articles for the quantitative analyses as well as editorials for qualitative analyses. Methods and approaches that are applied throughout the analyses in the book, such as Systemic Functional Grammar, lexicometric, rherotical and content analysis, are also outlined here. The data is introduced in good detail and, in my view, justified adequately. In all, the summative overview on page 34 makes for an impeccable presentation of data and methodology in terms of potential replicability of the analyses presented in the book.

The following chapters, 3 to 8, contain case studies addressing the question stated above. They consist of thorough grammatical studies with plenty of examples of qualitative analysis, but also a breadth of linguistic tools of quantitative analysis. The framework of the semiotic square, extending the well-known "us" and "them" by "non-us" and "non-them", is outlined in chapter 3, which is a more general account compared to the other analysis chapters. Those chapters concentrate on particular countries: Brexit (ch. 4), Poland, Hungary, Romania (ch. 5), Ukraine (ch. 6), Belarus (ch. 7) and Turkey (ch. 8). In each chapter, the book provides a useful amount of historical contextual information about that country and its relation to the EU, making for enlightening reading.

The book is very well proofread throughout, with just very few typographical errors. I was left confused once by what may be the only inconsistency in the book, on p. 87, where there is a difference between the numbers of mentions of States in the text and the supposedly corresponding n-values in Table 5.1.

Chapter 9 sums up the findings on how *Le Monde* understands Europe and provides a detailed discussion of the analyses conducted in the book. Le finds that, for *Le Monde*, "Europe" mainly refers to the EU. The paper establishes a European cultural identity that shapes "EU values", such as humanism and democracy, whose defense on the entire continent is deemed to be the duty of each member of the EU. Le's analysis shows that those on the continent who do not respect these values are excluded not just from the EU, but also from the concept of Europe. She concludes that "the set of common humanist and democratic values at the basis of the EU would be part of the essense of what it is to be 'European'" (p. 194), other essential parts being membership to the EU, being on the European continent and "sharing *Le Monde*'s understanding of the EU's purpose" (p. 204). The fuzzy areas between "us" (meeting all criteria, objective and subjective) and "them" (meeting the objective geographical criterion only) are thus made up of a diverse combination of subjective and objective criteria of defending particular values and achieving membership to the EU.

The fuzzy areas of belonging are partly defined as "non-us" and "non-them", the former objectively part of us but not subjectively so, i.e. in terms of values, the latter not objectively part (being non-EU), but subjectively so in that they respect the EU's values. Nevertheless, Le argues, the latter group tends to be invisibilised in *Le Monde*'s reporting. In the end, Le argues against the notion of "liminal entities" to refer to the fuzzy areas of belonging because it would reinforce the very dualistic view the book sets out to argue against. The value of the book is thus that it provides not the simple confirmatory

approach common to much research, but a sense of a conclusion that complicates the overall picture but that was taken based on and informed by a complex set of findings that reflect the complicated reality that is language and discursive practices.

Even though the book's implications are limited by the fact that it focusses on one newspaper, it achieves an informative overall conclusion on what it sets out to do and is thus a great contribution to discourse studies of Europe and, through its combination of methodological approaches, also an inspiring achievement within the wildly interdisciplinary undertaking that is Discourse Studies.

María-José Luzón & Carmen Pérez-Llantada (eds.), *Science Communication on the Internet: Old Genres Meet New Genres*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2019; vi + 242 pp., US$149.00 (pbk).

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Genre has always been a classic linguistic topic, especially in the studies of rhetorical occasions. Traditionally, it refers to a distinctive type of *text*, functioning as a means of constructing both the audience and the subject. Nowadays, however, communication practices are increasingly moving towards "being networked". Consequently, science exchange and knowledge dissemination are getting diversified online, and new genres (digital genres in particular) spring up.

Science Communication on the Internet: Old Genres Meet New Genres, edited by María-José Luzón & Carmen Pérez-Llantada, provides a comprehensive examination of how genres are widely used on the Internet in response to new rhetorical exigences and modern communicative demands. The volume comprises 11 chapters, which can be divided into five parts with distinct foci.

In the Introduction (Chapter 1), the editors discuss the "trends and emerging themes" of genre studies in digital environments. A great many new terms are introduced, such as *remediation of print genres, multi-genres, add-on genres, hyperlinked genres* and *context collapse*. They emphasize the significance of "study of the synergies among digital genres and of the relationships between digital and traditional genres" (p.5).

Part 2 is composed of Chapters 2 and 3, both of which focus their attention on the evolution of scientific research article and genre change. Rich evidence is presented to prove a heavy influence of the Internet on changes in the modern research articles.

In Chapter 2, Joseph E. Harmon makes an investigation of dramatic genre changes and innovations in both scientific articles and journals. In his study, typical articles published by Public Library of Science (PLoS) are analyzed and digital genre topics like *front matter*, *main text*, and *supporting information* are illustrated. In doing so, the author elaborates how Internet technologies lead to evolutions and changes in science communication and knowledge representation. Harmon offers his own view on what additional changes may come in the future and suggests a direction for future researches.

Chapter 3, by Ashley Rose Mehlenbacher & Brad Mehlenbacher, also probes into genre change and genre evolution. The researchers first explain that at the start of online